AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of the Claims

1. (Currently Amended) An obturator comprising:

an elongate tubular member having a proximal end and a distal end, the distal end having a slot which extends proximally;

a blade mounted within the slot at the distal end of the elongate tubular member; and

an actuating mechanism having a distal end connected to a proximal end of the blade, and a proximal end operable from the proximal end of the elongate tubular member, the actuating mechanism further comprising a force biasing element, a rotary element, a retaining element, and a release, wherein a force applied to the release slideably rotates the rotary element to ~~engage~~ disengage the release, causing the blade to advance beyond the slot and, when ~~the force~~ a force is ~~again~~ applied distally to the release, slideably rotates the rotary element to ~~disengage from~~ engage the release, causing the blade to retract into the slot.

2. (Original) The obturator of claim 1, wherein the force biasing element is a spring.

3. (Currently Amended) The obturator of claim 1, wherein the actuating ~~member~~ mechanism further comprises a finger–actuated button that is depressed to rotate the actuating mechanism to alternately engage and disengage the retaining element.

4. (Original) The obturator of claim 1, further comprising an introducer comprising a second elongate tubular member having a proximal end, a distal end, and a lumen therebetween adapted to receive the obturator.

5-12. (Canceled)

13. (New) An obturator comprising:

an elongate tubular member having a proximal end and a distal end, the distal end having a slot which extends proximally;

a blade mounted within the slot at the distal end of the elongate tubular member; and

an actuating mechanism having a distal end connected to a proximal end of the blade, and a proximal end operable from the proximal end of the elongate tubular member, the actuating mechanism further comprising a force biasing element, a rotary element, a retaining element, and a release, wherein a force applied to the release slideably rotates the rotary element from a position in which the rotary element and the release are engaged to a position where the release is disengaged from the rotary element, causing the blade to advance beyond the slot and, when the force is again applied to the release, slideably rotates the rotary element to engage the release, causing the blade to retract into the slot.

14. (New) The obturator of claim 13, wherein the force biasing element is a spring.

15. (New) The obturator of claim 13, wherein the actuating mechanism further comprises a finger–actuated button that is depressed to rotate the actuating mechanism to alternately engage and disengage the retaining element.

16. (New) The obturator of claim 13, further comprising an introducer comprising a second elongate tubular member having a proximal end, a distal end, and a lumen therebetween adapted to receive the obturator.